

COMPASSION

Cultivation of Compassion:

1. Universal benevolence (*metta*)
2. Sympathy (*karuna*)

Compassion has an area dimension called universal benevolence (*metta*) and a depth dimension called sympathy (*karuna*)

Universal benevolence (*metta*) is a selfless longing for the weal and welfare of all beings. It is not a love for one individual or even love for members of one's family. It is not even patriotism or love for all humanity. It is a longing for the weal and welfare of all beings without exception, even including animals, and even unknown beings in other worlds. Universal benevolence is losing one's self-interest in the interest in all beings, with no exceptions. It is like a drop of water or river entering the ocean and losing its identity by merging into the waters of the ocean. In the same way, self-interest is lost in the interest in all beings. Interest in others is not opposed to self-interest. It is an expansion of interest or extending one's interest to include all other beings without exceptions. One's interest, which was originally narrow, by being concerned only with oneself, is now expanded and extended to include all beings without exception. Universal benevolence is a broadminded state that has no limits.

Sympathy (*Karuna*), the depth dimension, is concerned about how deeply one is interested in the welfare of all beings. It is interest in the welfare of all beings without making any distinction between oneself and others. Other's welfare is as

important as one's own, just as the mother is concerned about the welfare of one's own child. Sympathy (*karuna*) can also be described as being in tune with the sorrows and the happiness of others, as if it were one's own. It may also be regarded as a state where one's heart vibrates in sympathy or in unison with that of others, and is therefore able to understand not only the others' point of view, but also their feelings.

Sympathy can be directed at five levels of discomfort (*dukkha*):

1. Sympathy for those who have lost what they possessed (persons -- through death; things -- through theft; natural disasters, etc.) and for those who are unable to get what they want due to inability.
2. Sympathy for those who have lost their self-identity (loss of position in society, suffering from inferiority complex, ego challenged, etc.).
3. Sympathy for beings in the human world (in prisons, hospitals, refugee camps, and those subject to starvation, suppression, etc.).
4. Sympathy for other less privileged beings (animals, ghosts, beings in hells), that you may not even know about.
5. Sympathy for those who are worrying or repenting for their misdeeds.

Sympathy can be directed at five levels of comfort (*sukha*)

1. Sympathy for those who have gained many things they wished for
2. Sympathy for those who have gained their self-identity
3. Sympathy for more privileged beings in the human world who are comfortable and happy
4. Sympathy for more privileged beings in heavens
5. Sympathy for those who are enjoying the freedom from guilt and the benefits of being good and pure in mind

Sympathy is not merely the sympathetic resonance for others sorrow but also the sympathetic congratulation for others happiness and comfort.

Cultivation of Universal Benevolence (*metta*):

We are all self-centered at the start. So we begin with the selfish narrow mind we are born with, wishing one's own welfare. We begin to make good wishes towards one-self first. It is these self-centered wishes that we gradually expand to include all beings. This way we broaden our mind. It is important to think these thoughts with feeling instead of merely verbalizing. Because feeling is connected with mental images, it is important to visualize the area we spread the feeling of compassion. So we think as follows:

Step I

May I be well, comfortable, peaceful and happy, free from lust, free from hatred, free from selfishness, free from worries, free from fears, and may I maintain myself dispassionate, compassionate, happy and tranquil.

Step II

Just as I should be well, peaceful and happy, may all beings in this room be well, comfortable, peaceful and happy (without making any distinction between oneself and others).

May all beings in this room whether human or non-human, small or large, far or near, visible or invisible, known or unknown, be free from passion, free from hatred, free from confusion, free from worries, free from fears, and may they all maintain themselves dispassionate, compassionate, happy and tranquil.

Step III

Keep repeating this same formula as above extending these good wishes outwards all beings in ever expanding concentric circles, moving from the room to the city, to the province, country, continent, earth, and the whole universe, and even beyond the universe, to all spheres of existence known and unknown, without limits, without bounds, to infinity without excluding anyone.

Step IV

Remain in the final stage of universal benevolence to all beings without exception, as long as possible.

Cultivation of Empathy (*karuna*):

Think of all those beings that suffer, here in the human world, and even in the world of ghosts and hells. Try to put yourself in their shoes and begin to feel their suffering as if it were your own. Wish that these beings be free from all suffering as soon as possible. Wish that they experience happiness soon.

Wish that they be free from passion, free from hatred, free from confusion, free from worries, and free from fears. May they all be dispassionate, compassionate, happy, and tranquil.

Now think of all beings in pleasant conditions here in this human world as well as outside, in the heavenly pleasure worlds, the peaceful worlds of form, and the peaceful worlds empty of forms. Try to imagine how happy and peaceful they are and feel happy about their happiness. Wish that their happiness last long. Wish that they be free from passion, free from hatred, free from confusion, free from worries, free from fears, and may they all be dispassionate, compassionate, happy and tranquil.

Cultivation of Selfless Happiness (*mudita*):

With the cultivation of compassion and empathy, self-consciousness has extended beyond its limits to become the consciousness of all beings. Self-consciousness has been

transformed into universal consciousness. This loss of self-consciousness brings all unhappiness to an end. What is left is the experience of selfless happiness. Try to remain in this selfless state of happiness as long as possible without self-consciousness.

Note: This experience of selfless happiness is the result of practicing dispassion and compassion. It cannot be practiced independent of the former states.

Cultivation of Tranquility (*upekkha*):

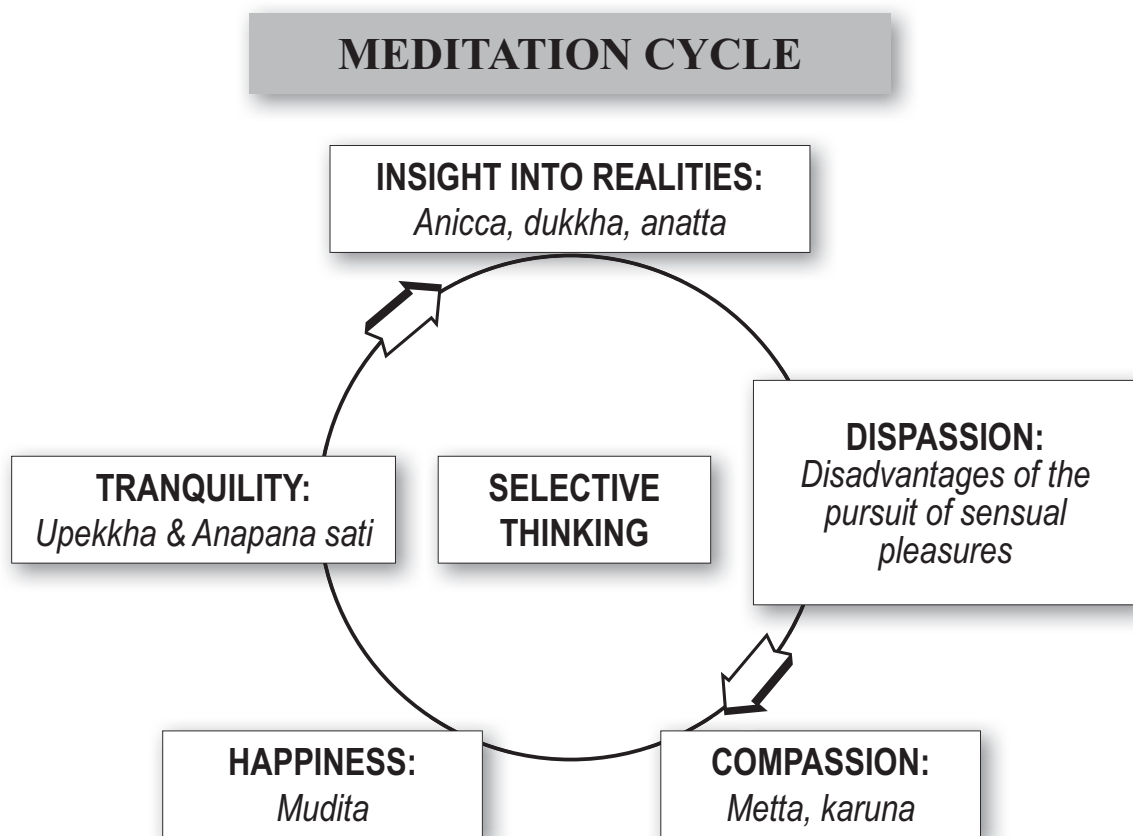
The happiness of selflessness is not an emotional excitement. It is a state of tranquility. Try to maintain this tranquility or stillness of mind as long as you can.

Observe the relaxation of the body and the calmness of the breathing and the pleasant comfortable feeling of relaxation. Maintain the calmness by focusing on the comfortable feeling of relaxation. Notice that when happiness is experienced within, attention stays within, without running to external objects. When the attention is focused within, the mind remains undisturbed without searching for happiness in the world outside or external circumstances. This is tranquil introspection (*upekkha*). It is healthy introspection, which should be distinguished from the so-called morbid introspection, which is not introspection at all but emotional disturbance. Remain in this healthy, relaxed, tranquil, peaceful state as long as possible.

Tranquility is produced by relaxation of the body and experiencing the comfortable feeling of relaxation. It is a resting of the mind, due to the absence of emotional disturbances. It is

not concentration of the mind but a stillness of the mind, due to the absence of emotional disturbances.

The five good thoughts to be cultivated are actually five stages in the process of transformation of the mind. In other words, they are five parts of a cycle of change, which ultimately becomes five aspects of the same final state of mind.



In-sight – Gaining the Harmonious Perspective.

Dispersion – The harmonious perspective leads to the giving up of self-centered desires.

Compassion – When selfishness disappears, one is able to take an interest in the welfare of others.

Happiness – When self-absorption and worry about oneself is no more, there is the experience of happiness.

Tranquility – The experience of selfless happiness is not an excitement, but a state of tranquility.

In-sight – Tranquility results in the mind settling within, when true introspection becomes possible. Introspection leads to the experiencing of experience, instead of existence, which is a paradigm shift. This results in Awakening from the “dream of existence”. This is liberation or emancipation (*vimutti*) from the emotional cause and existential suffering.

If this complete insight has not been attained, the Harmonious Cycle begins again.

Harmonious Mental Equilibrium (*samma samadhi*)

This is homeostasis, or the return to the original purity and tranquility of mind, which has been lost due to the emotional reaction to stimulation of the senses in the form attraction and repulsion. This state of equilibrium consists of five parts:

1. Inference (*vitakka*)
2. Inquiry (*vicara*)
3. Cognitive satisfaction (*piti*)
4. Comfort of body (*sukha*)
5. Unity of mind (*ekaggata*)